

To: Garvin, Shawn[garvin.shawn@epa.gov]
From: Vaught, Laura
Sent: Tue 2/4/2014 11:57:54 PM
Subject: FW: Rockefeller bemoans 'Appalachian myth,' lax regulations at spill hearing

From: POLITICO Pro [mailto:politicoemail@politicopro.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 04, 2014 1:13 PM
To: Vaught, Laura
Subject: Rockefeller bemoans 'Appalachian myth,' lax regulations at spill hearing

Rockefeller bemoans 'Appalachian myth,' lax regulations at spill hearing

By Erica Martinson

2/4/14 1:05 PM EST

Sen. Jay Rockefeller lamented “fatalism” and an anti-regulation “Appalachian myth” on Tuesday as a Senate environmental panel began examining last month’s disastrous chemical spill that cut off drinking water to 300,000 people in West Virginia.

“I came from outside of Appalachia, so sometimes I see Appalachia in ways that are different than others,” the West Virginia Democrat said, adding that the myth is “the idea that somehow God has it in his plan to make sure that industry is going to make life safe for them.”

“Not true,” Rockefeller said. “Industry does everything they can and gets away with it almost all the time, whether it’s the coal industry, not the subject of this hearing, or water or whatever. They will cut corners, and they will get away with it.”

He also talked about “Scotch-Irish culture ... I’m sorry, fatalism.”

“The world is as it is — we accept the world as it is,” Rockefeller said. “And the point is you don’t accept the world as it is, but as it should be, and you make it in that posture. I’m just — I’m here angry, upset, shocked, embarrassed that this would happen to 300,000 absolutely wonderful people, who, you know, work in coal mines and that stuff, but they’re depending on the fruit of the land, wherever it may be, for survival. They’re making it, but barely.”

“I think I’ll stop there for my own good,” said Rockefeller, who is retiring after this year.

The hearing by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee’s water subcommittee also featured both candidates running to replace Rockefeller — West Virginia’s Democratic secretary of state, Natalie Tennant, and Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.).

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Tennant, who was a scheduled witness at the hearing, asked the subcommittee to support a 10-year study to monitor the health of people exposed to chemicals from the spill. Capito, who made an unscheduled appearance before the panel, bemoaned a pattern of poor and incorrect information that both government agencies and private industry gave to people in West Virginia.

“I’m a mother, a grandmother, I live in the Kanawha Valley,” Capito said. “I understand the anger and trepidation that people feel because I feel it too.”

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